



**Department of
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News Release

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VA Challenges Veterans on Fitness in Nation's Capital

WASHINGTON – Veterans fitness and health care will take center stage in Washington, D.C. this weekend as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) makes its debut at the HealthierUS Fitness Challenge, sponsored by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, and the Fitness Challenge Foundation.

VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Jonathan Perlin will be joined by fitness diva Denise Austin and Health and Human Services (HHS) Assistant Secretary for Health Admiral John O. Agwunobi in challenging veterans and their families to take part in the HealthierUS Veterans project through a series of fitness demonstrations and nutrition exhibits at RFK Stadium Saturday, May 6, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

“Obesity and diabetes are major threats to the health and lifestyles of our veterans. The HealthierUS Veterans campaign by VA and the Department of Health and Human Services is educating veterans on healthy habits,” said the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, who unveiled the HealthierUS Veterans project at a National Press Club event earlier this year.

In remarks during the formal program, scheduled for the Main Stage beginning at 11:00 a.m., Dr. Perlin, VA's chief physician, will urge veterans to combat obesity and diabetes that affect veterans in VA's care more than other Americans. About 20 percent of VA's patients have diabetes.

The President's Council festival begins with a children's 2K walk, run or bike ride at 9 a.m., and VA kicks it off with a session on how to eat a quick, healthy breakfast.

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Commemorating 75 Years of Service

VA physicians, nurses, dietitians, and recreational therapists will conduct a variety of other interactive health education workshops on exercise, stretching, whole grains, snacking, fruits and vegetables, portion sizes and body mass index. Attendees can also learn how to help others get fit through the Fit for Life Volunteer Corps.

VA celebrates its 75th anniversary as an agency this year, and the President's Council is celebrating its 50th with this rally during National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. More than 50 exhibitors will participate in the four-hour festival, with demonstrations, classes, interactive sports and games, health screenings and publications. Further information is available at www.fitness.gov and also at www.healthierusveterans.va.gov.

RFK Stadium is at 2400 E. Capitol St., SE, Washington, D.C. Parking is free. Metro serves the Stadium Armory station on the orange and blue lines.

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